

## **Assembly Bill No. 576**

### **CHAPTER 329**

An act to amend Section 120440 of, and to add Section 120476 to, the Health and Safety Code, relating to immunizations.

[Approved by Governor September 19, 2006. Filed with  
Secretary of State September 19, 2006.]

#### **LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST**

**AB 576, Wolk. Immunizations.**

Existing law regulates the sharing of a patient's or client's immunization information between a health care provider, local health department, the State Department of Health Services, and other agencies. Existing law prescribes the process by which a patient or client, or parent or guardian of a patient or client, may refuse to allow the information to be shared.

This bill would, after the patient or client, or parent or guardian of a patient or client refuses the sharing of immunization information, allow the patient's or client's physician to maintain access to this information for the purpose of patient care or protecting the public health, and would allow the local health department and the department to maintain access to this information for the purpose of protecting the public health, as specified. The bill would also allow local health departments and the department to share the name of a patient or client, or parent or guardian of a patient or client, with a state, local health department, health care provider, immunization information system, or any representative of an entity designated by federal or state law to receive this information, and would authorize the department to enter into written agreements to share this information with other states for specified purposes, unless the patient or client, or parent or guardian of the patient or client, refuses to allow the information to be shared.

Existing law requires the State Department of Health Services to submit a biennial report to the Legislature on the immunization levels of children in the state, steps taken to increase immunization levels and immunization education, and recommendations of a strategy and the funding that would be necessary to immunize all children in the state.

This bill would require the department to submit by January 31, 2008, a sustainability plan for full funding of a statewide immunization information system, as specified.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

SECTION 1. Section 120440 of the Health and Safety Code is amended to read:

120440. (a) For the purposes of this chapter, the following definitions shall apply:

(1) “Health care provider” means any person licensed pursuant to Division 2 (commencing with Section 500) of the Business and Professions Code or a clinic or health facility licensed pursuant to Division 2 (commencing with Section 1200).

(2) “Schools, child care facilities, and family child care homes” means those institutions referred to in subdivision (b) of Section 120335, regardless of whether they directly provide immunizations to patients or clients.

(3) “WIC service provider” means any public or private nonprofit agency contracting with the department to provide services under the California Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children, as provided for in Article 2 (commencing with Section 123275) of Chapter 1 of Part 2 of Division 106.

(4) “Health care plan” means a health care service plan as defined in subdivision (f) of Section 1345, a government-funded program the purpose of which is paying the costs of health care, or an insurer as described in Sections 10123.5 and 10123.55 of the Insurance Code, regardless of whether the plan directly provides immunizations to patients or clients.

(5) “County welfare department” means a county welfare agency administering the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program, pursuant to Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 11200.5) of Part 3 of Division 9 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.

(6) “Foster care agency” means any of the county and state social services agencies providing foster care services in California.

(b) (1) Local health officers may operate immunization information systems pursuant to their authority under Section 120175, in conjunction with the Immunization Branch of the State Department of Health Services. Local health officers and the State Department of Health Services may operate these systems in either or both of the following manners:

(A) Separately within their individual jurisdictions.

(B) Jointly among more than one jurisdiction.

(2) Nothing in this subdivision shall preclude local health officers from sharing the information set forth in paragraphs (1) to (9), inclusive, of subdivision (c) with other health officers jointly operating the system.

(c) Notwithstanding Sections 49075 and 49076 of the Education Code, Chapter 5 (commencing with Section 10850) of Part 2 of Division 9 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, or any other provision of law, unless a refusal to permit recordsharing is made pursuant to subdivision (e), health care providers, and other agencies, including, but not limited to, schools, child care facilities, service providers for the California Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC),

health care plans, foster care agencies, and county welfare departments, may disclose the information set forth in paragraphs (1) to (9), inclusive, from the patient's medical record, or the client's record, to local health departments operating countywide or regional immunization information and reminder systems and the State Department of Health Services. Local health departments and the State Department of Health Services may disclose the information set forth in paragraphs (1) to (9), inclusive, to each other, and upon a request for information pertaining to a specific person, to health care providers taking care of the patient. Local health departments and the State Department of Health Services may disclose the information in paragraphs (1) to (6), inclusive, and paragraphs (8) and (9), to schools, child care facilities, county welfare departments, and family child care homes to which the person is being admitted or in attendance, foster care agencies in assessing and providing medical care for children in foster care, and WIC service providers providing services to the person, health care plans arranging for immunization services for the patient, and county welfare departments assessing immunization histories of dependents of CalWORKs participants, upon request for information pertaining to a specific person. Determination of benefits based upon immunization of a dependent CalWORKs participant shall be made pursuant to Section 11265.8 of the Welfare and Institutions Code. The following information shall be subject to this subdivision:

- (1) The name of the patient or client and names of the parents or guardians of the patient or client.
  - (2) Date of birth of the patient or client.
  - (3) Types and dates of immunizations received by the patient or client.
  - (4) Manufacturer and lot number for each immunization received.
  - (5) Adverse reaction to immunizations received.
  - (6) Other nonmedical information necessary to establish the patient's or client's unique identity and record.
  - (7) Current address and telephone number of the patient or client and the parents or guardians of the patient or client.
  - (8) Patient's or client's gender.
  - (9) Patient's or client's place of birth.
- (d) (1) Health care providers, local health departments, and the State Department of Health Services shall maintain the confidentiality of information listed in subdivision (c) in the same manner as other medical record information with patient identification that they possess. These providers, departments, and contracting agencies are subject to civil action and criminal penalties for the wrongful disclosure of the information listed in subdivision (c), in accordance with existing law. They shall use the information listed in subdivision (c) only for the following purposes:
- (A) To provide immunization services to the patient or client, including issuing reminder notifications to patients or clients or their parents or guardians when immunizations are due.
  - (B) To provide or facilitate provision of third-party payer payments for immunizations.

(C) To compile and disseminate statistical information of immunization status on groups of patients or clients or populations in California, without identifying information for these patients or clients included in these groups or populations.

(D) In the case of health care providers only, as authorized by Part 2.6 (commencing with Section 56) of Division 1 of the Civil Code.

(2) Schools, child care facilities, family child care homes, WIC service providers, foster care agencies, county welfare departments, and health care plans shall maintain the confidentiality of information listed in subdivision (c) in the same manner as other client, patient, and pupil information that they possess. These institutions and providers are subject to civil action and criminal penalties for the wrongful disclosure of the information listed in subdivision (c), in accordance with existing law. They shall use the information listed in subdivision (c) only for those purposes provided in subparagraphs (A) to (D), inclusive, of paragraph (1) and as follows:

(A) In the case of schools, child care facilities, family child care homes, and county welfare departments, to carry out their responsibilities regarding required immunization for attendance or participation benefits, or both, as described in Chapter 1 (commencing with Section 120325), and in Section 11265.8 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.

(B) In the case of WIC service providers, to perform immunization status assessments of clients and to refer those clients found to be due or overdue for immunizations to health care providers.

(C) In the case of health care plans, to facilitate payments to health care providers, to assess the immunization status of their clients, and to tabulate statistical information on the immunization status of groups of patients, without including patient-identifying information in these tabulations.

(D) In the case of foster care agencies, to perform immunization status assessments of foster children and to assist those foster children found to be due or overdue for immunization in obtaining immunizations from health care providers.

(e) A patient or a patient's parent or guardian may refuse to permit recordsharing. The health care provider administering immunization and any other agency possessing any patient or client information listed in subdivision (c), if planning to provide patient or client information to an immunization system, as described in subdivision (b), shall inform the patient or client, or the parent or guardian of the patient or client, of the following:

(1) The information listed in subdivision (c) may be shared with local health departments, and the State Department of Health Services. The health care provider or other agency shall provide the name and address of the State Department of Health Services or of the immunization registry with which the provider or other agency will share the information.

(2) Any of the information shared with local health departments and the State Department of Health Services shall be treated as confidential medical information and shall be used only to share with each other, and,

upon request, with health care providers, schools, child care facilities, family child care homes, WIC service providers, county welfare departments, foster care agencies, and health care plans. These providers, agencies, and institutions shall, in turn, treat the shared information as confidential, and shall use it only as described in subdivision (d).

(3) The patient or client, or parent or guardian of the patient or client, has the right to examine any immunization-related information shared in this manner and to correct any errors in it.

(4) The patient or client, or the parent or guardian of the patient or client, may refuse to allow this information to be shared in the manner described, or to receive immunization reminder notifications at any time, or both. After refusal, the patient or client's physician, may maintain access to this information for the purposes of patient care or protecting the public health. After refusal, the local health department and the State Department of Health Services may maintain access to this information for the purpose of protecting the public health pursuant to Sections 100325, 120140, and 120175, as well as Sections 2500 to 2643.20, inclusive, of Title 17 of the California Code of Regulations.

(f) (1) The health care provider administering the immunization and any other agency possessing any patient or client information listed in subdivision (c), may inform the patient or client, or the parent or guardian of the patient or client, by ordinary mail, of the information in paragraphs (1) to (4), inclusive, of subdivision (e). The mailing must include a reasonable means for refusal, such as a return form or contact telephone number.

(2) The information in paragraphs (1) to (4), inclusive, of subdivision (e) may also be presented to the parent or guardian of the patient or client during any hospitalization of the patient or client.

(g) If the patient or client, or parent or guardian of the patient or client, refuses to allow the information to be shared, pursuant to paragraph (4) of subdivision (e), the health care provider or other agency may not share this information in the manner described in subdivision (c), except as provided in subparagraph (D) of paragraph (1) of subdivision (d).

(h) (1) Upon request of the patient or client, or the parent or guardian of the patient or client, in writing or by other means acceptable to the recipient, a local health department or the State Department of Health Services that has received information about a person pursuant to subdivision (c) shall do all of the following:

(A) Provide the name and address of other persons or agencies with whom the recipient has shared the information.

(B) Stop sharing the information in its possession after the date of the receipt of the request.

(2) After refusal, the patient or client's physician, may maintain access to this information for the purposes of patient care or protecting the public health. After refusal, the local health department and the State Department of Health Services may maintain access to this information for the purpose of protecting the public health pursuant to Sections 100325, 120140, and

120175, as well as Sections 2500 to 2643.20, inclusive, of Title 17 of the California Code of Regulations.

(i) Upon notification, in writing or by other means acceptable to the recipient, of an error in the information, a local health department or the State Department of Health Services that has information about a person pursuant to subdivision (c) shall correct the error. If the recipient is aware of a disagreement about whether an error exists, information to that effect may be included.

(j) (1) Any party authorized to make medical decisions for a patient or client, including, but not limited to, those authorized by Section 6922, 6926, or 6927 of, Part 1.5 (commencing with Section 6550), Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 6910) of Part 4, or Chapter 1 (commencing with Section 7000) of Part 6, of Division 11 of, the Family Code, Section 1530.6 of the Health and Safety Code, or Sections 727 and 1755.3 of, and Article 6 (commencing with Section 300) of Chapter 2 of Part 1 of Division 2 of, the Welfare and Institutions Code, may permit sharing of the patient's or client's record with any of the immunization information systems authorized by this section.

(2) For a patient or client who is a dependent of a juvenile court, the court or a person or agency designated by the court may permit this recordsharing.

(3) For a patient or client receiving foster care, a person or persons licensed to provide residential foster care, or having legal custody, may permit this recordsharing.

(k) For purposes of supporting immunization information systems, the State Department of Health Services shall assist the Immunization Branch of the State Department of Health Services in both of the following:

(1) The provision of department records containing information about publicly funded immunizations.

(2) Supporting efforts for the reporting of publicly funded immunizations into immunization information systems by health care providers and health care plans.

(l) Subject to any other provisions of state and federal law or regulation that limit the disclosure of health information and protect the privacy and confidentiality of personal information, local health departments and the State Department of Health Services may share the information listed in subdivision (c) with a state, local health departments, health care providers, immunization information systems, or any representative of an entity designated by federal or state law or regulation to receive this information. The State Department of Health Services may enter into written agreements to exchange confidential immunization information with other states for the purposes of patient care, protecting the public health, entrance into school, child care and other institutions requiring immunization prior to entry, and the other purposes described in subdivision (d). The written agreement shall provide that the state that receives confidential immunization information must maintain its confidentiality and may only use it for purposes of patient care, protecting

the public health, entrance into school, child care and other institutions requiring immunization prior to entry, and the other purposes described in subdivision (d). Information may not be shared pursuant to this subdivision if a patient or client, or parent or guardian of a patient or client, refuses to allow the sharing of immunization information pursuant to subdivision (e).

SEC. 2. Section 120476 is added to the Health and Safety Code, to read:

120476. The department shall submit to the Legislature, by January 31, 2008, a sustainability plan for full funding of a statewide immunization information system that integrates existing immunization systems throughout the state. The plan shall demonstrate how the department will fully populate and sustain the statewide immunization information system over time.